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PW 1123: West China Area Study

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Deadline of 1 June 53

This is a tentative outline based upon a preliminary survey of set.

source materials for a study of the geography of Kansu, Tsinghai, Sikiang and northwestern Szechwan. A regional organization is proposed for the study and the tentative geographic regions shown on the accompanying map are based upon terrain, climatic and vegetation criteria interrelated with the economic activity and the ethnic groups of the area. The history, terrain, climate and vegetation of each region will be included in the study as well as information on ethnic and religious groups and their social and economic characteristics

I. The Western Frontiers of Chinese Agriculture.

A. Kansu Corridor.

1. The Loess Region (Eastern Kansu, including the Wei Ho Valley and the Shensi-Kansu Basin.)
2. Koko Nor Region (Northeastern Tsinghai).
3. Kain Gai Region (Central Kansu).
4. Sulc Ho Basin (Western Kansu).

(Treatment: This region is to be treated as a major unit, including the following basic problems: a) the strategic importance of the Kansu Corridor as the major route from China Proper to the west, including the proposed China-Sikiang-USSR railroad, b) the expansion of intensive Chinese agriculture into the loess lands and the transition of oasis agriculture and to steppe nomadism in the Corridor. Consideration will be given to the culture conflicts of ethnic groups and their economic activities in the region.)

B. Eastern Sikiang.

1. Ya Region (Tatsienlu area).
2. Ning Region (Southeastern and northeastern Sikiang and northwestern Szechwan).

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(Treatment: This is an area of culture contact and conflict in West China between the intensive sedentary agriculture of the West Chinese and the shifting agriculture and nomadism of the Tibetans and Mongols in Regions II-A, II-B, III-A and III-B. Consideration will also be given to the buffer tribes in Eastern Sihak (Minya, Mu-li, Gyarong, Ch'iang, etc.).

II. High Steppe Nomadism of Tsinghai.

A. The Central and Northern Mountain Ranges and Basins.

1. Kan Shan.
2. K'un-lun Shan, Anne Machin, Min Shan and Tsinling Ranges.
3. Tsaidam Basin (Tsaidam Mongols).
4. Koko Nor Basin (Amdo Tibetans).

B. The Chang-tang (Central Tibetans, Goloks, etc.).

(Treatment: The central and northern mountain ranges of West China are barriers to movement and contact between the various major ethnic groups in this area of steppe nomadism.)

III. Sedentary Agriculturalists of the Sihak Gorges.

A. Western Sihak (Kam Tibetans).

B. Southern Sihak (Border tribes such as the Mo-so, Mu-li, Minya, etc.).

(Treatment: The wild gorge region of central and western Sihak is populated by sedentary but primitive agriculturalists, the Kam Tibetans, who are on the frontier of the expanding intensive agriculture of the West Chinese (Region I-B). The region includes the valleys of the Salween, Mekong and Yangtze Rivers.)

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-- 2 --